
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PHOENIX (CENTRAL) FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is developing a new Regional Transportation Plan for the MAG region. As part of this effort, MAG conducted a series of focus groups to identify and document transportation issues and concerns. The focus groups were held throughout the Valley to capture ideas from geographically and ethnically diverse groups of participants. The findings will assist MAG in identifying regional values, goals, and objectives that will guide the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

The format of the Focus Groups included an opportunity for interactive discussion among participants, as well as a voting exercise that provided insight on priorities. To help structure the process, the discussions were organized into five topics areas. The topics included:

- ✕ Demographic and Social Change;
- ✕ The New Economy;
- ✕ Environmental and Resource Issues;
- ✕ Land Use and Urban Development; and
- ✕ Transportation and Technology.

Participants were encouraged to provide their own issues and concerns that related to each topic, both individually and in a round-table discussion. The responses received were documented in essentially a “verbatim” format so that the message intended by the participant was accurately conveyed.



The results of the **Phoenix (Central) Focus Group** are attached. This material has been divided into three parts as follows:

Part I. Key Focus Group Issues: In Part I, the key issues identified at the Phoenix (Central) Focus Group are listed by topic area. These issues are those voted by the participants to be the top two concerns in each topic area. Due to ties, certain topics may have more than two issues listed.

Part II. Comprehensive Listing of Participant Issues: In Part II, all the issues identified by the individual participants are listed. These issues have been grouped by topic area.

Part III. Roundtable Discussion Comments: In Part III, the results from a roundtable discussion are listed. These comments were recorded when all the focus group attendees participated in a general discussion of issues prior to voting on the top issues in each topic area.

If you have any questions or comments on the focus group process or the attached results, please contact Roger Herzog, MAG, at 602-254-6300 or rherzog@mag.maricopa.gov.



PHOENIX (CENTRAL) FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

PART I. KEY FOCUS GROUP ISSUES

The participants of the Phoenix (Central) Focus Group were given the opportunity to vote on their top two issues in each of the five topic areas. The two issues receiving the most votes are listed under each topic. Due to ties, certain topics may have more than two issues listed.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE PRIMARY ISSUES

- x Provide quality schooling in all communities.
- x Initiate higher regulation on stateside employers of illegal immigrants, make them cover more of the costs that society has to pay.

THE NEW ECONOMY PRIMARY ISSUES

- x [Need] mandatory skills training.
- x Lack of “educated” workforce.
- x [Need to] keep students in school.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES PRIMARY ISSUES

- x [Need] open space and recreational increases.
- x Make developers conserve more of the native vegetation that is destroyed with new development. Especially in the NBCC and SE Maricopa County.

LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRIMARY ISSUES

- x [Need to] build homes on vacant lots.
- x Light rail and improved mobility options are important to maintain economic vitality for the entire Valley.
- x Eyesores [need to] be eliminated.





PART I. FOCUS GROUP ISSUES (CONTINUED)

TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY PRIMARY ISSUES

- x Need for statewide transportation policy and funding support – state transportation tax.
- x Need for strong statutory regional public transportation agencies.
- x Make Williams (Gateway) a commercial (airline) airport.
- x Cities should have more than one municipal complex.
- x Develop smaller work sites (location) to reduce the need to drive long distances.
- x Need another airport.
- x Incentives should be offered for senior and youth citizens to drive and shop during non-risk hours.
- x Plan for smart highways and/or smart cars.

PART II. COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF PARTICIPANT ISSUES

The following is a comprehensive listing of the issues that individual participants of the Phoenix (Central) Focus Group identified as their concerns under each topic.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE ISSUES

- x Increased school age population, more schools.
- x Increased need for affordable housing.
- x Increased need for alternatives to driving.
- x With increase in seniors, we must be cognizant of the need to make adjustments in such things as streetlights.
- x With increase in immigration, more directions and signs must be in languages other than English.



- x The percentage of population who can drive will increase with more senior immigrants.



DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- x Increased need for alternatives to driving, in particular door-to-door services with the increased senior population [having] a greater need for accessible transportation alternatives.
- x Increased need for accessible housing in all price ranges, including affordable housing.
- x Need for affordable housing.
- x Good schools (tax base has been reduced).
- x [Need to improve] low-skill jobs.
- x Focus on blight areas (pride).
- x [Need to address the issue of] in-fill.
- x [Need to address the issue of] older drivers.
- x (Youth activities) – school age population.
- x Increased emphasis on safety.
- x Security and police monitoring.
- x Transit costs should be financed by tax dollars in the same manner as police, fire, streets, and sewers.
- x The given that car use will grow should be actively discouraged by efficient mass transit.
- x Safety should be a major priority in any transportation system.
- x More people will be working at home.
- x Provide safety for mixed uses – cars, hiking, bicycles, equestrian.

THE NEW ECONOMY ISSUES

- x Make a concerted effort to increase the number of small businesses with more programs for “hometown” business rather than well-known ones.
- x Promote the image of a skilled worker rather than a college graduate.



- x Increase in gap of have and have not.



THE NEW ECONOMY ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- x With increase in contract workers, there will be greater economic insecurity, i.e. lack of unemployment compensation.
- x [Need to address issue of] lack of leadership.
- x Consolidation has created leadership vacuum.
- x Mandatory completion of high school to meet the needs of a changing technical society.
- x Consolidation and lack of corporate headquarters.
- x [Need to address] attracting new industries.
- x Back office and low-income/low-skill jobs.
- x Transportation supports demands of industry.
- x Ratio of housing to job – can be spread across Valley.
- x Research is needed on the impact on higher education of the Internet.
- x “Leadership drain” may be addressed.
- x Learn a marketable trade.
- x Teach living skills – family, checkbook, relationships.
- x We need to widen base from development, tourism, and computer and aerospace mfg.
- x [Need to address issue of] low income and low skill jobs.
- x [Need to address issue of] industry vulnerability.
- x More low-tech jobs will be automated.
- x Government will be smaller – more services outsourced.



ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES ISSUES

- x [Need to address] encroachment on preserve lands.
 - x [Need to address] air quality improvements.
 - x Restrict the development of chemical plants in the inner city of Phoenix.
 - x Shift from industrial transportation units to mass transportation.
 - x [Need to address] destruction of natural habitat of wildlife.
 - x [Need to address] destruction of scenic views.
 - x Quality of water will decrease.
 - x [Need to address] air quality improvements.
 - x Environmental concerns will continue to grow.
 - x Growth and land planning to consider resource constraints (water).
 - x [Need to develop] company vanpool.
 - x [Need to improve] telecommuting.
 - x [Need to develop] four-day workweek.
 - x [Need to address] traffic jams.
 - x [Need to preserve] open space (parks, etc.).
 - x Provide local resources (stores, etc) to reduce travel time and improve air quality.
 - x [Need] open space preservation.
 - x In light of current crisis, greater emphasis should be placed on power generation.
 - x Greater emphasis has to be placed on water distribution and conservation.
 - x Open space agencies must be empowered on a state and regional basis.
 - x Cost of energy sources will increase.
 - x Need to use land more efficiently.
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- x More concrete needs better run-off control.

LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- x Employment and family activities outside City hub.
- x [Need to improve] parks and family gathering places.
- x City and regional planning agencies have to be independent of developer interests.
- x Light rail planning and construction has to be greatly accelerated at the city and regional level.
- x [Need to develop] public amenities.
- x [Need to develop] transit-oriented activity centers.
- x More building on unused land in urban core [is needed].
- x More free enterprise opportunities should be introduced into transportation.
- x Localities should eschew sales taxes. Reduce shopping centers.
- x Light rail and mobility important.
- x Public amenities and schools as good in central city as suburbs.
- x Transit-oriented activity centers should be encouraged.
- x Transit-oriented activity centers should be encouraged and nurtured.
- x Public amenities and schools must be as good in central city as those in suburbs.
- x Existing infrastructure needs to be upgraded as density increases.
- x Build plan areas, reduce travel time.
- x Builders can pay impact fees.
- x Noise needs to be minimized.
- x Need regional hiking, biking, equestrian trails. Link to state trails.



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- x Regional plan needs authority to carry out plans (may mean legislative changes).



TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

- x Need for state financial support for city and regional transit needs.
- x Timetable for light rail expansion to NE Phoenix.
- x Completion of the freeways on the drawing board now (i.e. 303, 101, 202, and Santan).
- x Possible incorporation of Deer Valley and Goodyear Airports into a joint plan to alleviate Sky Harbor concentration.
- x Better utilization of present freeways – more entries and exits, lane segregation.
- x Better noise abatement systems for existing freeways.
- x Reduce noise of airports.
- x Make Salt River navigable.
- x Congestion is inevitable.
- x More transportation options that is competitive with driving in the Valley.
- x Restrict commercial trucks to non-rush hour.

PART III. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS

The following are issues that were identified by participants in an informal, roundtable discussion held during the Phoenix (Central) Focus Group, regarding future transportation in the Valley.

- x Human resources – industry needs (infrastructure).
- x [Need to improve] mass transit.
- x Community awareness [is needed].
- x Area is growing (unavoidable) – county complexes throughout Valley.
- x Senior needs – longer street crossing lights.
- x Planning process should reflect transportation changes (horse-buggy-car).



- x Signs should be other than English.



PART III. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

- x Growth expansion – what happens to habitat/wildlife?
- x Look at new approach to transportation.
- x Need to access information through computers (reduce need for mass transit).
- x Another way of enjoying life while staying at home (ex. Viewing Herberger).
- x There will be no new economy without building on education – lack of leadership.
- x Fewer average-earning immigrants settle in certain neighborhoods – need more public transportation – less \$\$ means poorly maintained cars = poor air quality.
- x Quality of life – alternative transportation (versus cars):
 - People need to help each other/community to community;
 - Youth – better educated will stay in Valley;
 - Accessibility of transportation (especially for disabled, seniors, etc.);
 - Don't want to change into another Los Angeles; and
 - Having more choices.
- x Quality of life isn't just for elite:
 - Improving neighborhoods; and
 - Convenience (Walgreens).
- x Need more planning of communities (self-sufficient).
- x Low-cost housing [is needed].
- x Put more money into schools.
- x Other cities/countries have more options of transportation than cars.
- x Educational programs – address alternatives to cars.
- x Increase in bus service.



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- x Educate public – transit should be funded by government (police-fire-sewer).



PART III. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

- x State needs to take leadership role in funding.
- x Need to get developer's hold on planning reduced.
- x Need strong regional agency running transit.
- x Developers need to pay some infrastructure fees.
- x Transportation plan coordinated with statewide system.
- x Using land more efficiently [is needed].
- x Need more alternative modes of transportation.
- x [Need] more computer services.

